



MENOMINEE INDIAN TRIBE OF WISCONSIN CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

P.O. Box 910
Keshena, WI 54135-0910

June 10, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

**Re: Investigation into Possible Misconduct Related to the Menominee Indian Tribe's
Application to Take Land into Trust in Kenosha, Wisconsin**

Dear Secretary Salazar:

The Menominee Indian Tribe has recently become aware of potential misconduct by former Department of Interior officials related to their review of the Tribe's application to the Department of Interior to take land located in Kenosha, Wisconsin into trust for the Tribe (the "Application"). During the course of reviewing the administrative record provided by your Department to the Tribe and the court in the *Menominee Indian Tribe v. Department of Interior et al.* litigation (Case No. 1:09-cv-496) pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, the following disturbing facts have come to the Tribe's attention:

- The recommendation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Midwest Regional Office regarding the Tribe's application, a document which the Bureau of Indian Affairs refused to give to the Tribe despite repeated requests for it and refused to provide to the District Court in the administrative record on the grounds that it was privileged and confidential, was apparently released to Rothstein Donatelli Hughes Dahlstrom Schoenburg & Bienvenu LLP ("Rothstein Firm"), a law firm representing the Forest County Potawatomi Community. As you may know, the Forest County Potawatomi Community has been the most vocal and active opponent of the Tribe's efforts to acquire land in trust in Kenosha. The Rothstein Firm's November 19, 2008 comments provided to the BIA suggest reasons why the Department should deny the Menominee application – and these comments quote verbatim from the Midwest Regional Office's recommendation. The Rothstein Firm could not possibly have written these comments without having access to this supposedly privileged and confidential document, at the same time it was being withheld from the Tribe.

- Former Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Carl Artman made unknown “promises” to Scott Walker, Milwaukee County Executive, regarding the disposition of the Menominee Tribe’s application. Mr. Walker, another open opponent of the Tribe’s application, referenced these promises in a June 3, 2008 letter to former Deputy Secretary of the Interior James Cason.
- Meetings took place between Department of Interior officials, including Assistant Secretary Artman and Deputy Secretary Cason, and Wisconsin officials opposed to the Tribe’s application, including State Senator Scott Fitzgerald and State Representative Michael Huebsch, that are not properly documented in the administrative record provided to the Tribe and to the District Court. The Tribe was unaware of these meetings until receiving and reviewing the administrative record. And the Tribe still does not know exactly when or where these meetings took place, who exactly participated in them, or what was discussed.
- The BIA Midwest Regional Office’s recommendation memoranda regarding the Tribe’s application (dated January and December 2007) were finally released to the Tribe on May 31, 2010, along with the Draft Record of Decision prepared by the Midwest Regional Office in May 2007. The Midwest Regional Office recommended approval of the Tribe’s application and made detailed findings on all issues required by the regulations. The denial letter issued to the Tribe in January 2009, however, reversed many of those findings and the Regional Office’s ultimate recommendation with little or no explanation.

For example, the Midwest Regional Office’s January 19, 2007 Section 20(b)(1)(A) recommendation expressly finds that as a result of the Kenosha project, “increased governmental services and on-Reservation economic development will create jobs for tribal members who live on the Reservation, as well as tribal members who had previously left the Reservation in search of employment.” The January 2007 recommendation further states that the proposed facility in Kenosha “will create significant job opportunities both on and off the Tribe’s Reservation[;]” that the Kenosha project “will directly impact employment on the Reservation by providing additional funding for unfunded or under funded tribal programs[;]” that “the Reservation economy will not suffer if tribal members leave the Reservation for employment at the [Kenosha] Project[.]” that “increased employment opportunities on the Reservation will cause tribal members to remain on or return to the Reservation[;]” that employment would increase on the Reservation as a result of increased tourism due to an enhancement of the Tribe’s Menominee Nation Casino and Hotel on the Reservation, which would be funded with revenues from the Kenosha Project; that there would be increased on-Reservation employment as Project revenues flowing back to the Reservation “will allow tribal entrepreneurs to build businesses and hire employees on the

Reservation[;]” and that on-Reservation employment would also increase as a result of on-Reservation construction projects funded with revenues from the Kenosha facility.

But the denial letter issued to the Tribe in January 2009 states that “acquiring the Land so far from the existing Reservation could extend the effects of the Tribe’s termination by perpetuating the splintering of the tribal community” and that “the Tribe has not convincingly demonstrated that the mere injection of revenues would directly decrease Reservation unemployment, ameliorate social and health care problems, or balance the Tribe’s Reservation demographics” – in direct contravention of the Midwest Regional Office’s findings. Not only does the denial letter completely ignore and contradict the Department’s own findings, but the administrative record is entirely bereft of any evidence that the BIA’s Central Office even considered the Regional Office’s findings or analysis presented in the January 2007 recommendation.

Thus even though the BIA Midwest Regional Office spent years analyzing the Tribe’s application and made detailed findings regarding on-Reservation economic and social and other benefits that would result from the Kenosha Project, there is no evidence that officials in BIA’s Central Office performed any substantive review.

- Although the denial letter ignores and contradicts the findings of the Midwest Regional Office, it contains language and arguments that appear in the Rothstein Firm’s November 19, 2008 comments – but not in either of the draft denial letters produced in the administrative record, which are from early 2008. Both the Rothstein Firm’s November 2008 comments and the January 2009 denial letter argue that the Kenosha land is not “necessary” to facilitate economic development and that the need for government revenue does not justify acquisition under 25 C.F.R. 151.3, and the handwritten notes on the fax cover page transmitting the Rothstein Firm’s comments emphasize “that [Menominee’s] application does not show [the] acquisition is ‘necessary’ under [25 C.F.R.] 151.3(a)(3) and that the need for revenue does not satisfy IRA as required by 151.3.” The earlier drafts of the denial letter have no similar analysis regarding whether the land is “necessary” under 25 C.F.R. 151.3 (those drafts, like the denial letters issued to twelve other tribes, state only that “[t]he regulations require the Department, in 25 C.F.R. 151.3(a)(3), to make a determination that the acquisition of the land is necessary to facilitate tribal self-determination, economic development, or Indian housing.”). (The Draft Record of Decision prepared by the Midwest Regional Office in May 2007, however, noted that the Kenosha project would “generate a dependable stream of net income that the Tribe would use to support tribal government functions and to meet the needs of its members in accordance with Federal policies enunciated in IGRA, *the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA)*, and related laws *and regulations*.”) It is perhaps no coincidence that the Rothstein Firm’s comments argue that “[n]early every government, including the Menominee Tribe, can use or ‘needs’ additional revenue, but that alone does not satisfy the purpose of the IRA [;]” and the denial letter states: “All governments, including tribal

governments, can make the argument that revenues are necessary. But under the regulations, the pertinent analysis is whether the land itself is necessary.”

- The administrative record also shows that Department officials had already begun drafting the Tribe’s denial letter at the time they were asking the Tribe for additional information to supplement its Application in response to the January 2008 Guidance memorandum. The record further suggests that the decision to cancel the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement had also been made before the Tribe was given the opportunity to supplement the Application.

These facts are even more concerning to the Menominee Tribe given that after leaving his position with the Department of the Interior, Assistant Secretary Carl Artman accepted a position as a partner in a Milwaukee law firm that represents the Forest County Potawatomi Community, Godfrey & Kahn, S.C. (For background information related to both Forest County Potawatomi’s opposition to the Menominee Tribe’s Application and Forest County Potawatomi’s relationship with Godfrey & Kahn, please see the attached October 28, 2005 article from the *Lakeland Times*.)

The questionable circumstances surrounding the denial of the Menominee Tribe’s Application are the subject of a story published June 10, 2010 in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. A copy of the story, which is available at <http://www.jsonline.com/business/96013509.html>, is attached.

Based on the above facts alone, we believe that you should withdraw the flawed January 2009 rejection of the Menominee Application and ensure that the Application is given the fair review by BIA’s Central Office that it has yet to receive. In addition, we request that you initiate an investigation through the Inspector General’s Office into the circumstances and potential misconduct surrounding the denial of the Menominee Application. This investigation should include:

1. How did the law firm for the Tribe’s most vocal opponent receive confidential and privileged Bureau of Indian Affairs documents consistently denied to the Tribe (and also not provided to the District Court)?
2. What promises did then Assistant Secretary Carl Artman make to Wisconsin political opponents of the Application regarding the processing and eventual rejection of the Tribe’s Application?
3. What basis in fact or law, if any, is there to support Assistant Secretary Carl Artman’s January 2008 Guidance related to off-reservation acquisitions of trust land? Were there any studies done to support the Guidance’s unfounded conclusions regarding the supposed negative

on-reservation impacts from off-reservation economic development projects? Did the Department look at the experiences of Indian tribes that operate off-reservation casinos, including the Forest County Potawatomi Community, to see whether there had been negative on-reservation impacts for them?

4. What legal and factual analysis, if any, did the Central Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs conduct that led it to come to a decision on the Menominee Application that was completely opposite to the Midwest Regional Office's recommendation regarding the Application?

5. Is there a relationship between and/or among the issuance of the January 2008 Guidance and the subsequent rejection of the Menominee Application based on that Guidance, the leaking of privileged and confidential documents to a representative of the Forest County Potawatomi Community, meetings between Assistant Secretary Artman and state and local officials in Wisconsin opposed to Menominee's Application, and Mr. Artman's subsequent employment with a law firm representing the Forest County Potawatomi Community?

The Tribe and our 8,715 members hope that political pressure surrounding off-reservation gaming will not deter you from vigorously pursuing a thorough and unbiased investigation.

Given your interest in seeing your Department provide all citizens fair treatment and due process, and your duty to uphold the United States' trust responsibility to the Menominee Indian Tribe, we trust that the circumstances surrounding the bad faith with which the Department has treated the Tribe are of great concern to you.

We look forward to a prompt response to this request.

Sincerely,



Laurie Boivin
Chairwoman, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin

- c. Larry Echohawk, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
Mary L. Kendall, Acting Inspector General, Department of the Interior

Menominee tribe says deck stacked against Kenosha casino bid

Lawyer says tribe was denied memos that supported plan

By [Cary Spivak](#) of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: June 9, 2010 | [\(3\) Comments](#)

Newly discovered memos suggest the dice were loaded against the Menominee tribe of northern Wisconsin in its so-far unsuccessful bid to open a \$1 billion casino in Kenosha, lawyers for the tribe say.

The memos indicate that the U.S. Department of the Interior gave documents to the Forest County Potawatomi tribe that helped it build a case against the casino. The Potawatomi oppose the Kenosha proposal because it would compete with their own Milwaukee casino, which had gaming revenue of nearly \$400 million last year.

The same documents given to the Potawatomi were withheld from the Menominee, the Menominee's lawyers say. They are fighting in federal court to force the Interior Department to reconsider the Kenosha proposal.

The Menominee application for a casino at the now-closed Dairyland Greyhound Park was rejected by then-Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, an outspoken opponent of off-reservation casinos, in the final days of President Bush's administration. The January 2009 rejection was based in part on guidance rules issued in 2008 by the department that made it more difficult for a tribe to get an off-reservation casino if the site was far from the reservation. Kenosha is about 200 miles from the Menominee's reservation in Keshena.

"The people seeking to deny all off-reservation gaming for political and financial purposes of their own came up with the guidance," said Rory Dilweg, attorney for the Menominee tribe.

In a statement released by the tribe's public relations agency, Menominee chairwoman Laurie Boivin added, "These previously hidden papers also illustrate the shocking political chicanery and shady backroom dealings that led to the Bush administration's eleventh-hour denial of our application."

Lawsuit alleges rules broken

The Menominee tribe last year sued the Interior Department in federal court over the rejection, arguing that the government violated its own rules and dealt with the tribe in bad faith when it killed the casino deal.

The disputed documents are buried in a court file containing more than 13,000 pages. Dilweg argues they bolster the tribe's claim that its casino application was improperly denied.

The documents - two memos from the Interior Department's Minneapolis office to its Washington, D.C., headquarters recommending approval of the Menominee casino - were given to the Potawatomi after it submitted requests for them under the federal Freedom of Information Act. Those letters were referred to in a November 2008 memo written to Interior by Potawatomi lawyers in opposing the Kenosha casino.

"We followed the FOIA law and were consistent and constant in our requests," said Ken Walsh, Potawatomi spokesman. Walsh provided copies of the Potawatomi tribe's requests for the documents, including initial denials issued by Interior.

Dilweg said the Menominee did not file a Freedom of Information request but did make repeated verbal requests to the Interior and Justice departments.

"I find it interesting the federal government chose to give it to them, but not to us," Dilweg said. "We asked them for copies and they refused to provide them, saying they were internal and deliberative."

The Menominee did not get the Minneapolis documents until this week, he said.

In a separate but similar case, the St. Croix Chippewa tribe made a Freedom of Information request for similar documents that was denied. The St. Croix asked for Minneapolis office recommendation letters concerning its bid to open an off-reservation casino in Beloit, a proposal whose rejection is being challenged in a different federal court case.

"They would never give it to us," said Andrew Adams III, attorney for the Chippewa.

Scott Walker letter

Dilweg, the Menominee attorney, also points to a second memo - this one a letter to Interior from Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, who opposes the Kenosha plan - stating that unspecified promises were made to Walker by a top Interior official involved in the review of the Menominee application. The letter said the promises were made by Carl Artman, former assistant secretary of Interior, to Walker.

Artman is now a partner at the Milwaukee law firm of Godfrey & Kahn, which represents the Potawatomi tribe on environmental issues.

"Specifically, I would like to discuss promises that were made to me by former Assistant Secretary Artman and why no action has been taken with regard to the application," Walker wrote to Jim Cason, then associate deputy secretary of Interior.

"I can't think of any promises I made to Scott Walker, except to keep him informed," Artman said.

Walker, who is running for the Republican nomination for governor, confirms that he opposed the casino because of the negative impact it would have on the Potawatomi Milwaukee casino. The City and County of Milwaukee each receive annual payments from the Potawatomi, based on the casino's gaming revenue. The payment last year was \$5.5 million to each.

A motion pending before U.S. Judge William C. Griesbach asks the court to allow the Menominee to seek additional evidence, including taking depositions, to build its case.

"The administrative record (in the court file) is not a complete representation of what happened with our application," Dilweg said. "We certainly believe that the Department of Interior acted arbitrarily and capriciously in denying our application."

Brian Pawlak, an assistant U.S. attorney representing the Interior Department, declined to comment on the case. In court filings, the federal government contends that its rejection of the Menominee bid was proper and that the tribe has "provided no evidence, let alone the necessary strong showing, to support its speculative allegation of bad faith and improper behavior."

The Menominee, who own a small casino in Keshena, have been trying since the mid-1990s to tap the Milwaukee and Chicago gambling markets by buying and then adding thousands of slot machines and table games to Dairyland, which is located just off I-94. The tribe still holds an option to buy the site.

The latest proposal has been in trouble since February 2007, when Dennis Troha, the Kenosha trucking magnate who originally spearheaded the effort, was indicted and later convicted on charges of illegally funneling \$100,000 in contributions to the campaign of Gov. Jim Doyle and other political funds.

Federal law gives governors veto power over off-reservation proposals that are approved by Interior.

Potawatomi budgets \$7.2 million for 2006 political campaign

By: Richard Moore
The Lakeland Times

Published: *October 28, 2005*

If its proposed 2006 budget is any indication, the Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC) is preparing to dramatically increase the amount of dollars it spends on politics and campaigns, budgeting \$7.2 million for the 2006 cycle, internal tribal documents reveal.

The tribe's executive council approved the political spending and overall budget and sent it to a meeting of the general council, which also approved it, sources within the tribe have told The Lakeland Times. The newspaper could not independently verify the general council vote by press time.

The new budget would represent a 75 percent increase over the \$4 million the tribe set aside for politics, public relations and lobbying this year and dwarf the amount of money the tribe spent on campaigns in 2004 and 2002.

The year 2004 was itself record-breaking for the FCPC. Among other things, the tribe kicked in nearly \$900,000 in an effort to defeat a referendum proposal for a Menominee-owned casino in Kenosha County, transferring at least \$370,000 of compact litigation funds into a Godfrey & Kahn Trust Account for use in the November 2004 vote. The tribe also distributed tens of thousands of dollars to both Republican and Democratic candidates and to party committees.

Documents obtained by The Lakeland Times show a tribe awash in money available for political campaigns – spending the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) has sanctioned despite warnings of abuse from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and other high level officials.

Along the way, the records paint a picture of how the Potawatomi and other tribes are using the new-found power of already mammoth and still growing gaming revenues to influence elections, the negotiations of gaming compacts, and both federal and state budget issues, not to mention efforts to stave off gaming competition from other tribes. They also weave an inside tale of political intrigue, documenting the way tribal officials route gaming dollars to state candidates through national parties, spend lavish sums for banquets and political golf outings, and shower consultants and lobbyists with millions of dollars a year.

Not surprisingly, given the amount of money tribal officials handle, the records tell an additional story of internal conflict, allegations of mismanagement and graft, as well as blatant violations of the Potawatomi tribal constitution.

The spending

According to PoliticalMoney Line.com, a campaign finance watchdog website, Indian tribes have doled out more than \$23.6 million nationally to federal candidates, PACs and political parties between 1999 and the present, and the amount of the contributions, fueled by gaming profits, is continuing to increase.

In 1999-2000, for example, recipients received \$3 million from tribes. In 2001-02 the giving topped \$9.3 million; in 2003-04 that figure rose to \$10.5 million.

Among PoliticalMoneyLine's biggest listed tribal contributors are the Morongo Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians (\$2,096,760), the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (\$1,678,624), the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe of Connecticut (\$1,426,218), and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Calif.) (\$1,004,808).

Now the Potawatomi – along with other Wisconsin tribes – are making their move to join the ranks of the elite.

It wasn't too long ago that political involvement by Wisconsin tribes was virtually non-existent, the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign (WDC), a nonpartisan campaign finance group, has reported.

"They were not players in Wisconsin politics until very recently," Mike McCabe, the group's executive director, told the Associated Press in 2003. "When they jumped in, they made a big-time splash. What we've seen is the entrance of a new and very powerful force in Wisconsin."

The FCPC's aggressive political involvement dates back only to 2001, when it reportedly spent about \$700,000 on issue ads aimed at stopping the Crandon mine. The tribe promptly followed those with ads supporting Jim Doyle's bid for governor. Those ads only served as a prelude to the most controversial campaign finance incident of the 2002 gubernatorial race. On Oct. 29, the FCPC gave the Democratic National Committee (DNC) \$200,000 on the same day the Ho-Chunk gave the DNC a check for \$500,000.

Within days, the DNC gave the Doyle campaign \$1 million for a final push to victory, which prompted accusations of money laundering from some finance reform groups. Since then the tribe has kept on giving, with checks being written to help pay for such things as party conventions and a Native American weekend outing in South Carolina. On July 22, 2004, for example, the FCPC gave \$30,000 to help pay for the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

The Republicans have not been left out. On April 30, 2004, the tribe's executive council approved a \$15,000 contribution to the Republican National Committee.

For the year, according to documents, the tribe allotted similar amounts of \$15,000 to the GOP and Democratic national committees, with another \$2,000 each flowing to the Kerry and Bush campaigns.

Beyond those contributions, according to a memo from tribal political consultant Martin Schreiber (and former governor), the tribe unleashed a series of federal contributions. "Pursuant to the action of the Executive Council to protect and enhance tribal enterprises and relationships, the attached sets forth the second wave of federal political contributions," Schreiber wrote to Tribal Chairman Gus Frank on July 9, 2004.

On the Republican side, the memo called for the tribe to contribute to Sen. John McCain (\$4,000), Straight Talk America PAC (\$2,000), Rep. Dennis Hastert (\$4,000), and Rep. John Boehner (\$2,000). Both the National Republican Senatorial Committee and the National Republican Congressional Committee received \$15,000 each.

On the Democratic side, Rep. Ron Kind received \$2,000, Sen. Tom Daschle and Rep. Robert Menendez got an equal amount, and \$1,000 went to BadgerPAC. As on the GOP side, both the National Democratic Senatorial Committee and the National Democratic Congressional Committee received \$15,000 each.

But nothing quite matched the tribe's spending on the nonbinding referendum concerning a proposed Indian casino complex at a Kenosha County dog track, a partnership between the Menominee and Connecticut's Mohegan tribe. The Potawatomi spared nothing in trying to fend off gaming competition in the Milwaukee area. Indeed, Kenosha County finance records show the tribe spending \$893,529 as of last Dec. 31.

The tribe apparently set up a separate fiduciary account to handle the referendum's public relations effort, and tribal e-mails obtained by The Lakeland Times show hundreds of thousands of dollars being deposited in the account, transferred from funds set aside for compact litigation.

"Following our conversation in connection with the Trust Fund for the Kenosha Referendum campaign the FCPC has authorized a wire transfer of \$370,000 into the specified account of Godfrey & Kahn to serve as the fiduciary agents for this fund," the tribe's Chief Financial Officer Steven LaVake wrote to Godfrey & Kahn attorney Mike Wittenwyler in an Oct. 6, 2004 e-mail.

That transfer authorization occurred less than a week after the tribal executive council approved the shifting of an equal amount of funds from its compact litigation budget line item.

"Ruth Pemma motions to approve \$370,000 of the Compact Litigation line item from the proposed FY 2004-05 Budget, if not approved, revert back to the FY 2003-04 Compact Litigation Budget for Kenosha referendum," state the minutes of that meeting, which took place Sept. 30.

The motion carried 4-0.

On Oct. 12, 13, and 14, one week after the wire transfer authorization for the Godfrey & Kahn trust account, the Potawatomi made three contributions on three successive days to the referendum effort. The amounts totaled \$364,750.

A committee called Citizens Seeking Honest Answers handled actual deposits and spending for the referendum campaign. However, the FCPC were the only citizens contributing to the committee.

All totaled, the tribe contributed \$893,529 in cash and vaguely described in-kind professional services. In fact, the Potawatomi reported \$301,279 of in-kind contributions between Oct. 12 and Dec. 31, 2004 for undefined professional services.

The other side spent heavily as well, collecting more than \$1.1 million by the end of 2004 for a committee called Jobs for Kenosha. The Menominee Indian tribe through its gaming development company bankrolled most of that effort, though finance records also show significant individual, local business and labor donations.

This past June, in testimony on legislative gaming bills, Potawatomi Attorney General Jeff Crawford stayed away from tribal self-interest in framing the FCPC's opposition to the casino and talked instead about the best economic interests of the Milwaukee area. "The Potawatomi are against a Connecticut tribe making tens of millions from a Wisconsin casino at the expense of Milwaukee and Wisconsin," Crawford stated. "The proposed Kenosha casino is set up so that Connecticut wins millions of dollars while Milwaukee loses jobs and tourism."

Despite that larger assertion, beginning in 2002 and continuing into 2005, the FCPC has quickly become one of the state's biggest political special interests. That those interests are related to gaming compacts and the growth of the gaming industry – and the FCPC's place in that market – is something not even the tribe has denied.

"Tribes are beginning to understand the value of making contributions to candidates who understand the potential of economic development," Potawatomi spokesman Tom Krajewski told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's Spivak & Bice in the wake of the 2002 gubernatorial election.

If the tribe comes anywhere close to spending its \$7.2 million political budget next year, the impact could be enormous and certainly record-breaking.

Of course, not all that money would be slated for direct contributions to candidates or party committees. Substantial amounts go for independent issue ads, and much goes to political consultants.

Of the \$4 million budgeted in 2004, for example, \$1.377 million was budgeted for consultants, the lion's share to Schreiber. The tribe also budgeted \$260,000 for media and public relations, \$620,000 for lobbying, \$900,000 for compact litigation, \$375,000 for a line item called intergovernment agreement, and \$490,000 for direct contributions to candidates.

Those numbers are not absolute, however, and it is impossible to tell just how much is actually spent on referenda and political campaigns because of line item transfers within the tribal budget, as happened in the Kenosha referendum.

No matter what the final spending will be, what is certain is that those seeking political contributions for next year are already lining up, and the tribe has begun to make its electoral decisions in earnest.

In July, for instance, the executive council voted to deny a campaign contribution request from gubernatorial candidate Mark Green. On Sept. 13 – before the tribe's new gaming compact was signed with the state – the council voted to table a donation to the Doyle campaign.

This is the first in a series that will look at ties between gaming and politics in the state of Wisconsin

Next: A look at the legalities of tribal political spending